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MARVEL COMICS GROUP

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PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN®

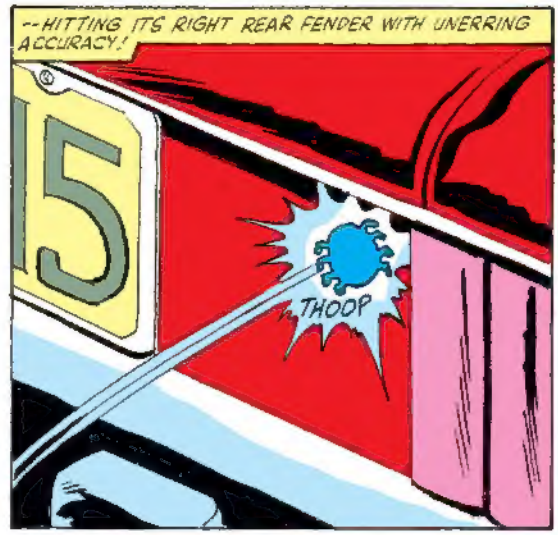
MILLER / WRACEK

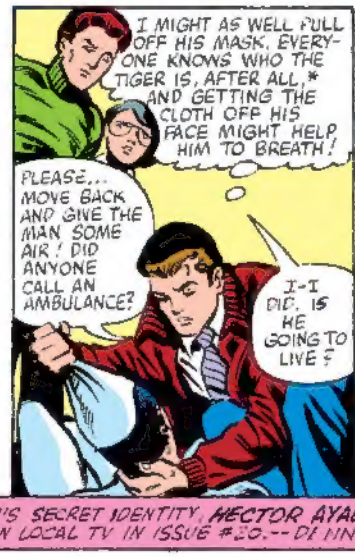
While attending a demonstration in radiology, student PETER PARKER was bitten by a spider which had accidentally been exposed to RADIOACTIVE RAYS. Through a miracle of science, Peter gained the arachnid's powers... and in effect, became a human spider...

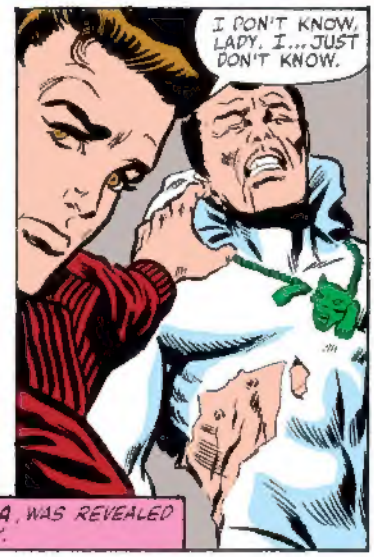
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN!®

THE DAY OF THE HERO KILLERS!

ROGER STERN WRITER | RICK LEONARDI PENCILER | JIM MOONEY INKER | JIM NOVAK LETTERER | BEN SEAN COLORIST | DENNY O'NEIL EDITOR | JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF





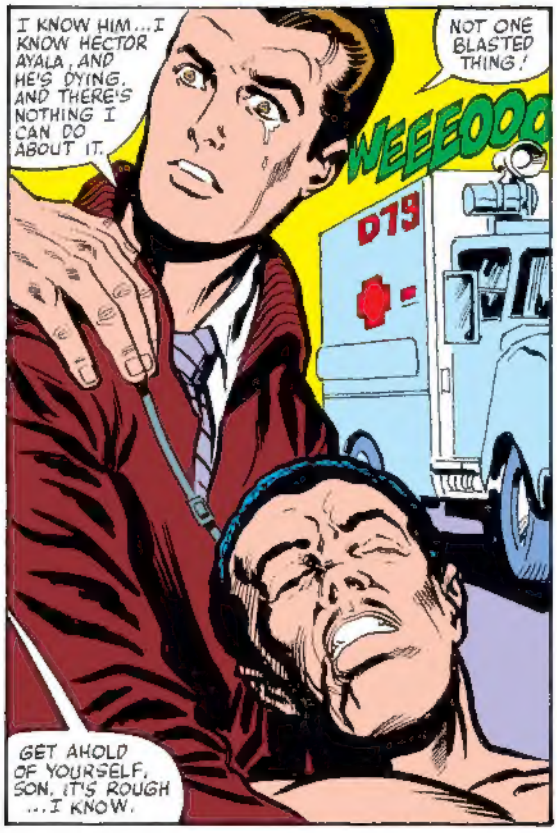


*THE WHITE TIGER'S SECRET IDENTITY, **HECTOR AYALA**, WAS REVEALED ON LOCAL TV IN ISSUE #20.--DI LINY.

SUDDENLY, FROM THE REAR OF THE CROWD, COMES A FAMILIAR, BLUSTERY VOICE...
WHAT IN BLAZES IS GOING ON HERE?
A DUDE'S BEEN SHOT, MAN.
RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE BUGLE? WHERE'S THAT PARKER WHEN YOU NEED HIM?
I'M... RIGHT HERE, JONAH.

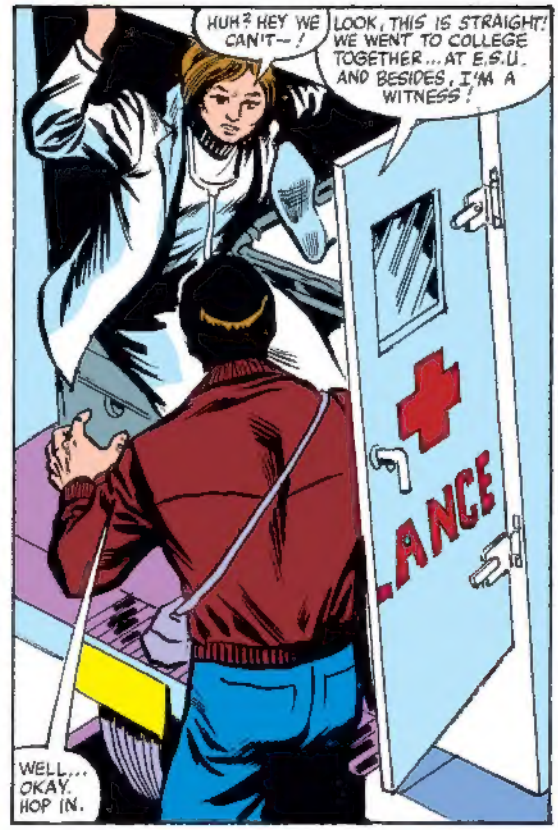
WHAT?! LET ME THROUGH! C'MON, ROBBIE! THIS IS NEWS!
WATCH YER SHOVIN', MAC! WHO DO YA THINK YA ARE?
EASY, JONAH, DON'T JOSTLE THE READERSHIP!
WHO AM I? I'M J. JONAH JAMESON, THAT'S WHO... I PUBLISH THE DAILY BUGLE!
OH, YEAH? IN THAT CASE, YA GOT MY SYMPATHY!
PAH! EVERYONE'S A SIDEWALK CRITIC! PARKER! DID YOU GET ANY...

...PICTURES? OH... MY... LORD.
JONAH, IF YOU WANT TO RUN PICTURES OF THIS, YOU CAN FIND YOURSELF ANOTHER CITY EDITOR!
NO, WE'D NEVER... THAT IS, I HAD NO IDEA--!
H-HE'S DYING, JONAH!


I KNOW HIM...I KNOW HECTOR AYALA, AND HE'S DYING, AND THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT.
NOT ONE BLASTED THING!
WEEEOOO
D79
GET AHOLD OF YOURSELF, SON. IT'S ROUGH ...I KNOW.

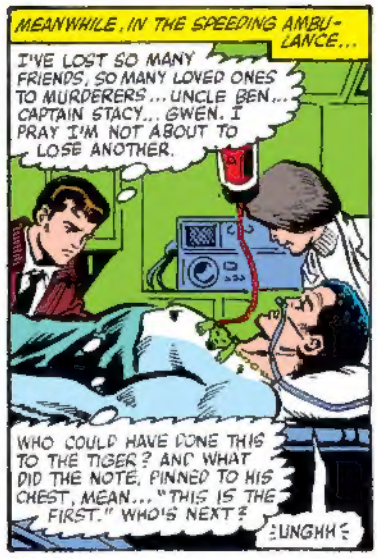
I'VE BEEN IN THE NEWSPAPER BUSINESS A LONG TIME, AND I'VE SEEN A LOT OF ROUGH STUFF... MOST OF IT SENSELESS.
HIS HEARTBEAT'S REAL WEAK, AND HE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD! RADIO EMERGENCY TO BE READY AND GET ME AN I-V!

TAKE IT EASY WITH HIM, EDDIE! WITH THE SHAPE HE'S IN...
YEAH, I KNOW WHAT YA MEAN. I HOPE THE TRAFFIC'S LIGHT. OTHERWISE, THIS GUY MIGHT NOT MAKE IT!
HEY, WAIT! I'M COMING WITH YOU!


HUH? HEY WE CAN'T--!
LOOK, THIS IS STRAIGHT! WE WENT TO COLLEGE TOGETHER... AT E.S.U. AND BESIDES, I'M A WITNESS!
WELL... OKAY. HOP IN.

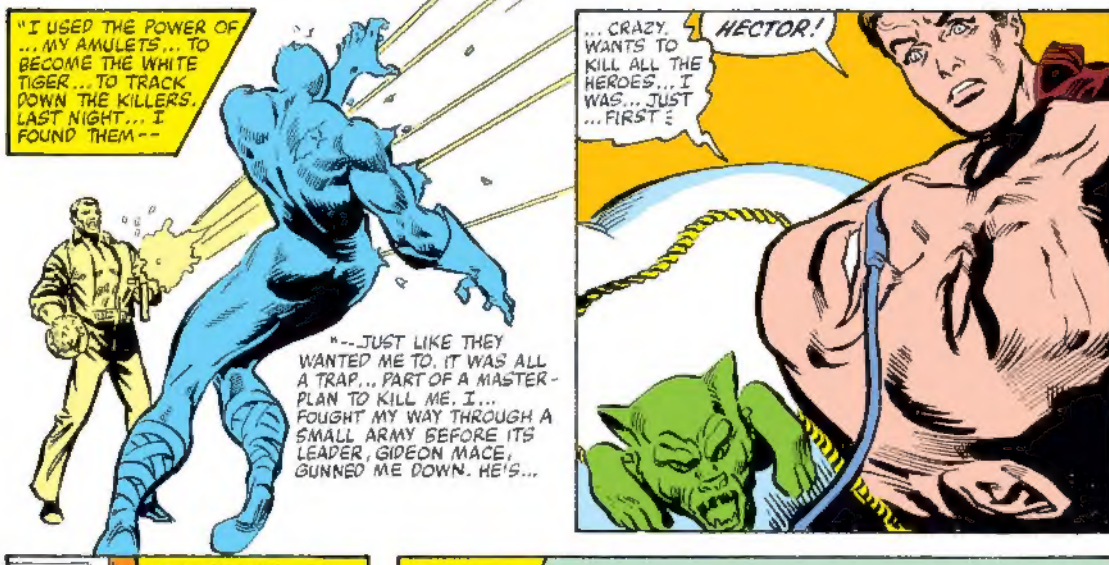
WITHIN SECONDS, THE AMBULANCE STREAKS OFF THROUGH THE MAN-MADE CANYONS OF NEW YORK CITY, LEAVING BEHIND A RAPIDLY DISPERSING CROWD...
WEEEOOO
YOU'RE UNUSUALLY QUIET, JONAH!
EH? OH, I WAS JUST THINKING, ROBBIE. YOU KNOW, I'VE NEVER LIKED THESE SO-CALLED SUPER HEROES.
JONAH, YOU'VE PRACTICALLY MADE A CAREER OUT OF DISLIKING THEM!
I'VE HAD GOOD CAUSE, ROBBIE! IT'S TOO EASY FOR SOME OF THESE COSTUMED TYPES, WITH ALL THEIR STRANGE POWERS, TO TAKE THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. THAT MAKES THEM MENACES IN MY BOOK!
BUT WHEN I SEE A YOUNG MAN WHO'S BEEN SHOT UP LIKE THAT, I... WELL, I JUST DON'T KNOW. COME ON...

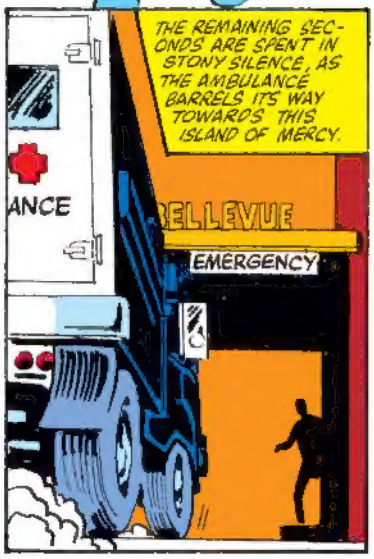
...WE'VE GOT A PAPER TO GET OUT
JOE ROBERTSON MERELY NODS, REALIZING THAT HIS BOSS HAS JUST COME VERY CLOSE TO ADMITTING THAT HE COULD BE WRONG...
...AND KNOWING, SADLY, THAT IT IS PROBABLY AS CLOSE AS JONAH WILL EVER GET.

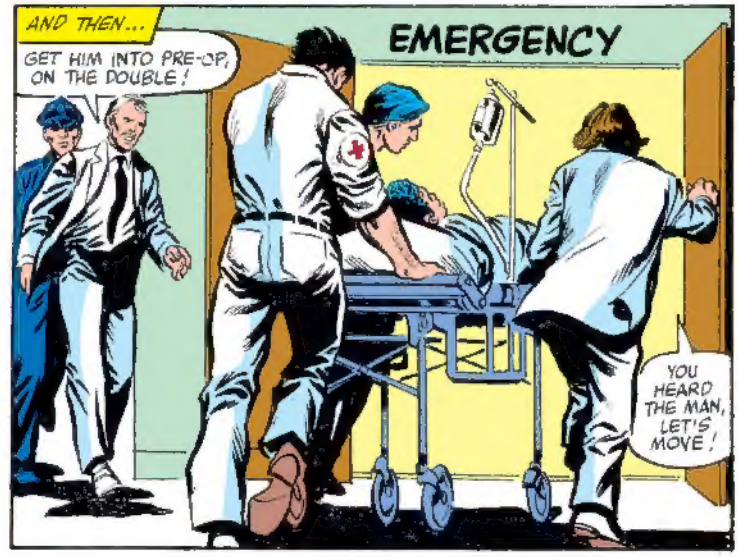

MEANWHILE, IN THE SPEEDING AMBULANCE...
I'VE LOST SO MANY FRIENDS, SO MANY LOVED ONES TO MURDERERS... UNCLE BEN... CAPTAIN STACY... GWEN. I PRAY I'M NOT ABOUT TO LOSE ANOTHER.
WHO COULD HAVE DONE THIS TO THE TIGER? AND WHAT DID THE NOTE, PINNED TO HIS CHEST, MEAN... "THIS IS THE FIRST." WHO'S NEXT?
:UNGHH:

HECTOR! IT'S ME, PETER PARKER! TAKE IT EASY, AMIGO, WE'RE TAKING YOU TO THE HOSPITAL!
PETER?
YES. YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE IT, MAN! HANG IN THERE!
HECTOR, WHO DID THIS TO YOU?
L-LONG STORY. TWO NIGHTS AGO...

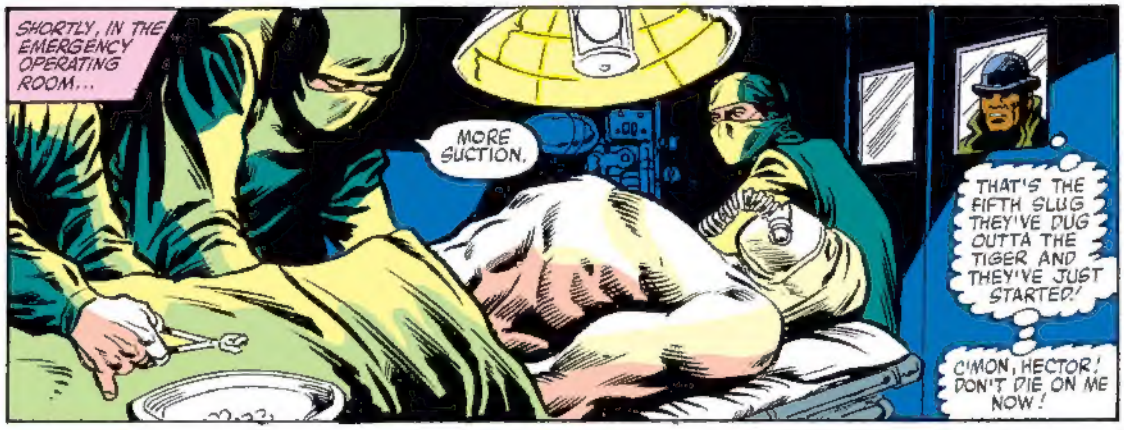
"...I CAME HOME... AND FOUND MY FAMILY MURDERED. DEAD... ALL DEAD.


"I USED THE POWER OF ...MY AMULETS... TO BECOME THE WHITE TIGER... TO TRACK DOWN THE KILLERS. LAST NIGHT... I FOUND THEM--
"--JUST LIKE THEY WANTED ME TO. IT WAS ALL A TRAP... PART OF A MASTER-PLAN TO KILL ME. I... FOUGHT MY WAY THROUGH A SMALL ARMY BEFORE ITS LEADER, GIDEON MACE, GUNNED ME DOWN. HE'S...
HECTOR!
...CRAZY. WANTS TO KILL ALL THE HEROES... I WAS... JUST ...FIRST:


THE REMAINING SECONDS ARE SPENT IN STONY SILENCE, AS THE AMBULANCE BARRELS ITS WAY TOWARDS THIS ISLAND OF MERCY.
ANCE
ELLEVUE
EMERGENCY


AND THEN...
GET HIM INTO PRE-OP, ON THE DOUBLE!
EMERGENCY
YOU HEARD THE MAN, LET'S MOVE!

THE EMERGENCY ROOM OF BELLEVUE HOSPITAL IS NO STRANGER TO GUNSHOT VICTIMS, BUT RARELY HAS IT RECEIVED ONE IN THIS CONDITION WHO WAS STILL ALIVE!
IT WAS A LIGHT BROWN SEDAN, OFFICER. I DIDN'T GET THE LICENSE NUMBER, BUT THEY WERE OUT OF STATE PLATES... THE LAST NUMBER WAS FIVE!
MMMM... PROBABLY STOLEN, ANYWAY!
PREP THIS MAN AS FAST AS YOU CAN ...AND PUT THIS NECKLACE WITH HIS EFFECTS!
HOLD IT!
YOU TAKE THOSE TRINKETS OFF'A THE TIGER, AN' YOU'LL BE SIGNIN' HIS DEATH WARRANT!
WHAT?! WHO--?
IT'S BLACKBYRD! I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN MONTHS!*
*NOT SINCE ISSUE #10, TO BE EXACT-- DENNY.
THE NAME'S BYRD... NATHANIAL ALEXANDER BYRD. I'M A PRIVATE DETECTIVE, AN' THE TIGER'S A FRIEND OF MINE.
HE GETS HIS POWERS FROM THOSE CHUNKS OF JADE SOMEHOW, AND WITHOUT 'EM, HE GETS SICK... JUST LIKE A JUNKIE GOIN' COLD TURKEY.
THE SHAPE HE'S IN NOW, I DON'T THINK HE'D LIVE THROUGH SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT!
THE STARTLED DOCTOR TAKES A STEP BACK, AND LETS THE AMULETS LIE.
WELL, NOTHING MORE I CAN DO HERE. WE CAN ONLY PUT OUT AN A.P.B. ON THE CAR AND HOPE FOR THE BEST.
PARDON ME, MR. BYRD, BUT I'M PETER PARKER, AND--!
THAT'S A NICE CAMERA, BRO'. YOU WITH THE PAPERS?
YES, I WORK FOR THE BUGLE AND...
WELL, I'VE GOT ONE BASIC RULE... I DON'T TALK TO THE PRESS.
B-BUT--!
SORRY, I DON'T MAKE EXCEPTIONS!
BOY, THAT WAS STUPID! I DON'T KNOW WHY I THOUGHT BYRD WOULD BE COOPERATIVE WITH PETER PARKER.
I HAD A HARD ENOUGH TIME GETTING INFO OUT OF HIM AS SPIDER-MAN!*
*IN ISSUE #9--D.
HOWEVER...
... BLACKBYRD DID FINALLY HIT IT OFF WITH SPIDER-MAN! SO--
--IF HARLEM'S ANSWER TO KOJAK WON'T TALK TO PETER PARKER, THEN I'LL JUST BECOME SOMEONE WHO HE WILL TALK TO!
AT LEAST, I HOPE HE WILL. I'D HATE TO THINK THAT I'M CHANGING CLOTHES FOR NOTHING!


SHORTLY, IN THE EMERGENCY OPERATING ROOM...
MORE SUCTION.
THAT'S THE FIFTH SLUG THEY'VE DUG OUTTA THE TIGER AND THEY'VE JUST STARTED!
C'MON, HECTOR! DON'T DIE ON ME NOW!

HOW'S HE DOING, BLACKBYRD?
HUH? WHO THE DEVIL--? OH, IT'S YOU!

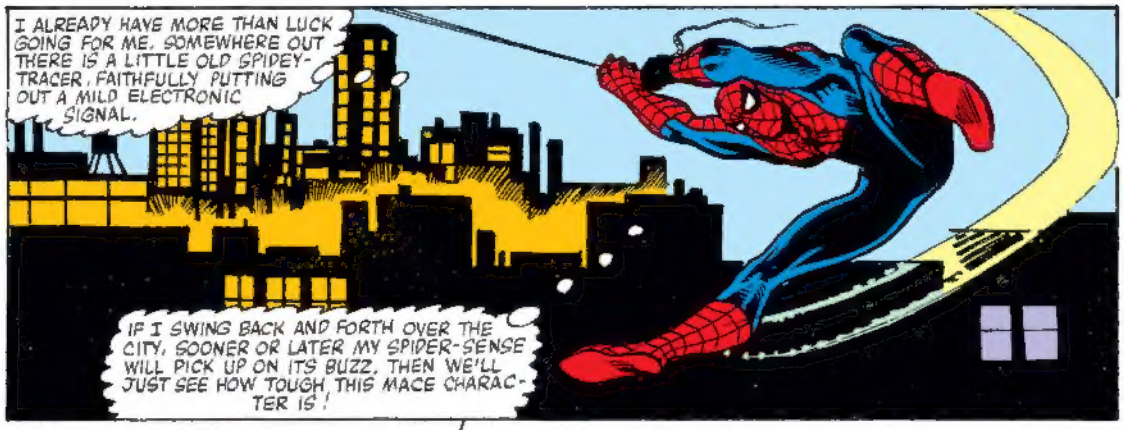
WHO'D YOU EXPECT, GASPAR THE WONDER PUPPY?
SORRY, THIS REALLY ISN'T THE TIME FOR SNAPPY PATTER, IS IT?
WE NEED TO TALK, BYRD!
I'M NOT TALKIN' TO ANYONE WHO'S HANGIN' UPSIDE-DOWN!

OKAY, DOWN TO EARTH IT IS, THEN!
I NEED SOME INFO. I WANT TO GET THE GUY WHO DID THIS TO HECTOR.
YOU AIN'T THE ONLY ONE. OKAY...

... BUT LET'S TALK OUTSIDE, AWAY FROM ALL THE RUBBERNECKS!
SUITS ME. I RAN INTO A BUDDY OF MINE ON THE WAY HERE... A PHOTOG NAME OF PARKER.
HE TOLD ME YOU WOULDN'T GIVE HIM THE TIME OF DAY.
HE TOLD YOU RIGHT.

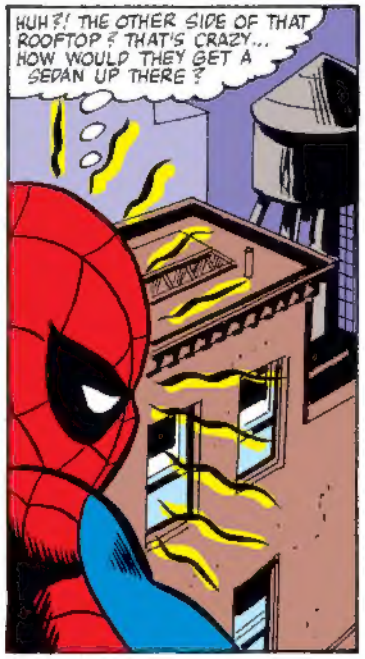
IT'S TOO BAD YOU DIDN'T LISTEN TO HIM. HE'S A PAL OF HECTOR'S, TOO. AND HE HEARD HECTOR SAY WHO SHOT HIM... A GUY CALLED GIDEON MACE.
MACE, HUH?
YOU'VE HEARD OF HIM?
YEAH, HE FOUGHT POWER MAN A COUPLE'A TIMES. HE'S AN EX-ARMY COLONEL... REAL SECTION-8 MATERIAL. I HEARD HE WAS KILLED.

OBVIOUSLY, YOU HEARD WRONG. WISH ME LUCK.
LUCK?! YOU'LL NEED MORE THAN THAT!


I ALREADY HAVE MORE THAN LUCK GOING FOR ME. SOMEWHERE OUT THERE IS A LITTLE OLD SPIDEY-TRACER, FAITHFULLY PUTTING OUT A MILD ELECTRONIC SIGNAL.
IF I SWING BACK AND FORTH OVER THE CITY, SOONER OR LATER MY SPIDER-SENSE WILL PICK UP ON ITS BUZZ. THEN WE'LL JUST SEE HOW TOUGH THIS MACE CHARACTER IS!

BUT AS MINUTES OF SEARCHING TURN TO HOURS...
NOTHING. I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT. BUT NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, WHAT IF THEY DROVE THE SEDAN OUT TO THE JERSEY MEADOWS AND ABANDONED IT?
NO, I CAN'T GIVE UP HOPE. I HAVE TO FIND MACE AND HIS BOYS AND NAIL THEM FOR HECTOR. HE'D DO THE SAME FOR ME.

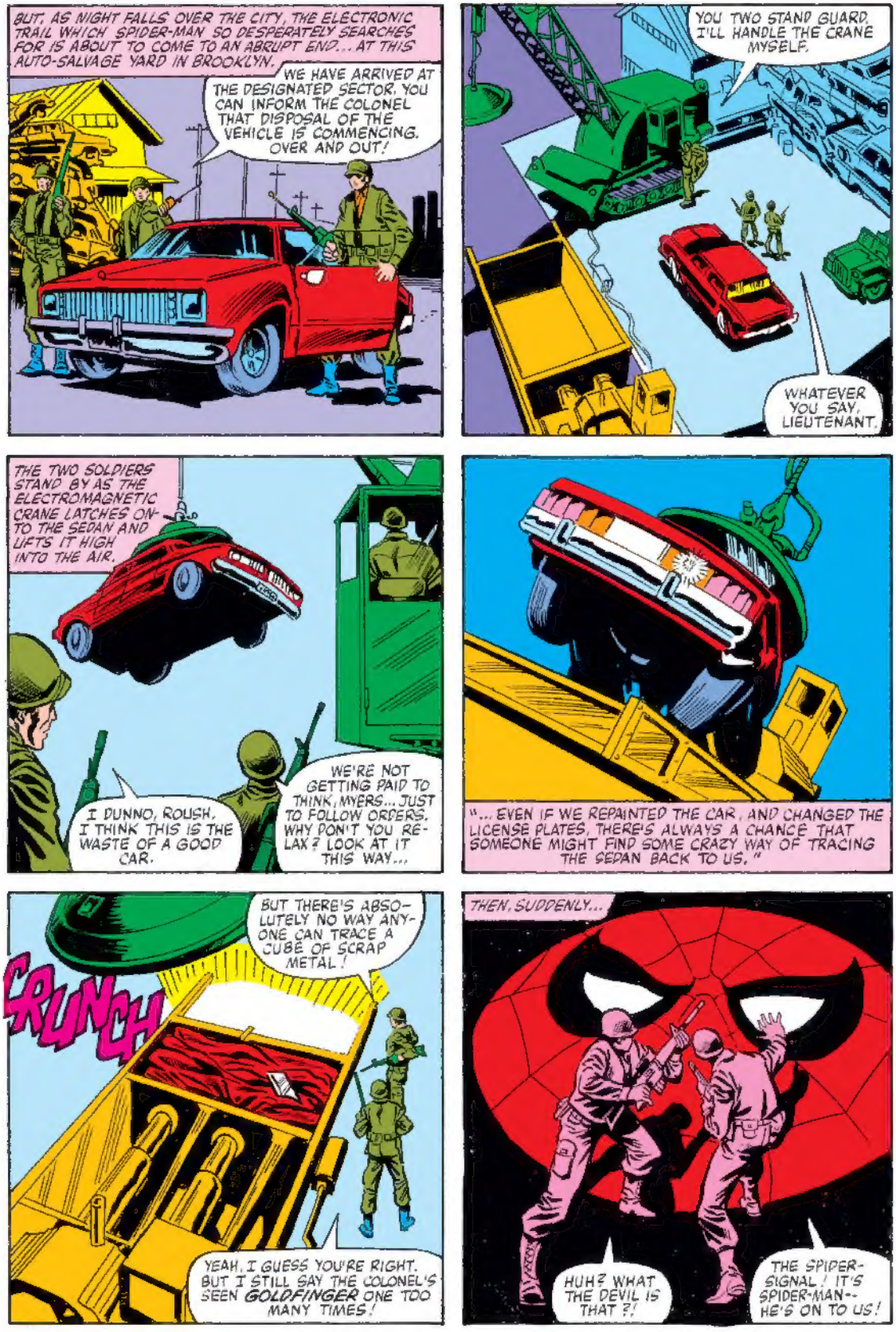
WHOA-HO, NELLIE! THERE'S THAT OLD FAMILIAR BUZZ NOW! I MUST BE JUST ABOUT ON TOP OF MY TRACER! THE SIGNAL SEEMS TO BE COMING...
...FROM OVER THERE.


HUH?! THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT ROOFTOP? THAT'S CRAZY... HOW WOULD THEY GET A SEDAN UP THERE?

OH, NO!
COO-COO-COO!
THAT PIGEON... IT'S THE ONE I ACCIDENTALLY SNAGGED WITH A TRACER LAST WEEK!*
*ISSUE #49.--D.

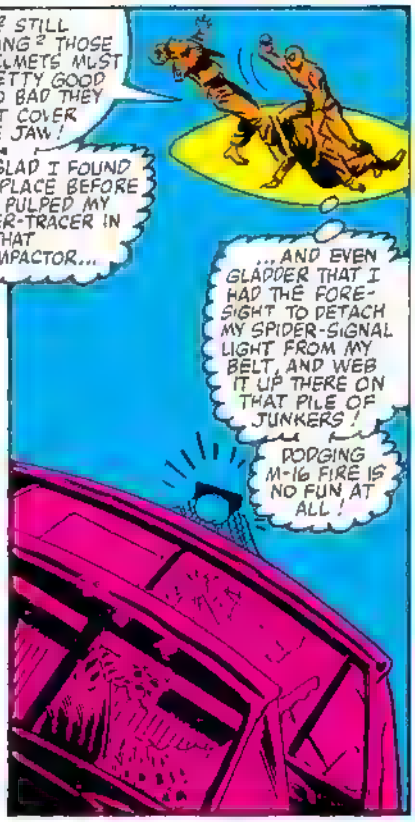
COO?
SORRY ABOUT THE TAIL-FEATHERS, KIDDO, BUT THESE THINGS ARE EXPENSIVE!
THIS IS A FINE MESS. I'VE SPENT ALL THIS TIME SEARCHING, AND ALL I'VE GOTTEN FOR MY TROUBLES IS THE BIRD!

I HAVE TO RE-DOUBLE MY EF-FORTS. THE TIGER MAY BE DYING ON THAT OPERATING TABLE... AND I'M GONNA GET THE GUY WHO DID IT!


BUT, AS NIGHT FALLS OVER THE CITY, THE ELECTRONIC TRAIL WHICH SPIDER-MAN SO DESPERATELY SEARCHES FOR IS ABOUT TO COME TO AN ABRUPT END... AT THIS AUTO-SALVAGE YARD IN BROOKLYN.
WE HAVE ARRIVED AT THE DESIGNATED SECTOR. YOU CAN INFORM THE COLONEL THAT DISPOSAL OF THE VEHICLE IS COMMENCING. OVER AND OUT!
YOU TWO STAND GUARD. I'LL HANDLE THE CRANE MYSELF.
WHATEVER YOU SAY, LIEUTENANT.
THE TWO SOLDIERS STAND BY AS THE ELECTROMAGNETIC CRANE LATCHES ON TO THE SEDAN AND LIFTS IT HIGH INTO THE AIR.
I DUNNO, ROUSH. I THINK THIS IS THE WASTE OF A GOOD CAR.
WE'RE NOT GETTING PAID TO THINK, MYERS... JUST TO FOLLOW ORDERS. WHY DON'T YOU RELAX? LOOK AT IT THIS WAY...
"... EVEN IF WE REPAINTED THE CAR, AND CHANGED THE LICENSE PLATES, THERE'S ALWAYS A CHANCE THAT SOMEONE MIGHT FIND SOME CRAZY WAY OF TRACING THE SEDAN BACK TO US."
CRUNCH
BUT THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO WAY ANYONE CAN TRACE A CUBE OF SCRAP METAL!
YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. BUT I STILL SAY THE COLONEL'S SEEN GOLDFINGER ONE TOO MANY TIMES!
THEN, SUDDENLY...
HUH? WHAT THE DEVIL IS THAT?!
THE SPIDER-SIGNAL! IT'S SPIDER-MAN-- HE'S ON TO US!

HE MUST BE UP THERE! SHOOT! SHOOT TO KILL!
PTOW! TOW-TOW!

"SHOOT TO KILL! HUH? WELL, IF YOU BOYS INSIST ON PLAYING SOLDIER, THEN I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I GO IN FOR A LITTLE FLANKING MANEUVER!
WHAT? STILL STANDING? THOSE G.I HELMETS MUST BE PRETTY GOOD ..TOO BAD THEY DON'T COVER THE JAW!
I'M GLAD I FOUND THIS PLACE BEFORE THEY PULPED MY SPIDER-TRACER IN THAT COMPACTOR...


...AND EVEN GLADDER THAT I HAD THE FORE-SIGHT TO DETACH MY SPIDER-SIGNAL LIGHT FROM MY BELT, AND WEB IT UP THERE ON THAT PILE OF JUNKERS!
DODGING M-16 FIRE IS NO FUN AT ALL!

BUT, IN THE CAB OF THE CRANE..
DISPOSAL CREW TO BASE! WE ARE UNDER ATTACK... REPEAT WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!

MEANWHILE, AT MACE'S SECRET HEADQUARTERS..
WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS WITH POWER MAN-- HIS SKIN RESISTS REGULAR ARMS FIRE. BUT I WANT HIM DEAD AND SOON. I HAVE A PERSONAL INTEREST IN KILLING HIM
AND IN ADDITION, BOTH THE MAGGIA AND THE HALWANI FREEDOM FRONT HAVE INVESTED IN OUR EFFORTS TOWARDS HIS DEMISE
SIR! WE'RE GETTING A DISTRESS SIGNAL FROM THE DISPOSAL CREW!
PLUG IT THROUGH THE SPEAKER, SOLDIER! THE COLONEL WILL WANT TO HEAR THIS!

I REPEAT SPIDER-MAN HAS FOUND US! HE'S ALREADY K.O'ED MYERS AND ROUSH, AND HE'S COMING FOR..
WUDD
SMAK
OHFF!

OKAY, SOLDIER-BOY, YOU'LL NOTICE THAT YOU'RE STILL CONSCIOUS THAT'S PARTLY BECAUSE I'M A REAL SWEET-HEART OF A GUY--
-BUT MOSTLY BECAUSE I FIGURE AN OFFICER LIKE YOURSELF COULD BEST TELL ME WHERE TO FIND YOUR LEADER! RIGHT?
J-J- JOHNSON, HAROLD R LIEUTENANT... 0317 54-0811.

DON'T GIVE ME THAT NAME, RANK, AND SERIAL NUMBER STUFF THIS ISN'T A WAR.
OH, BUT IT IS, SPIDER-MAN!
WHO?
I BELIEVE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ME. THE NAME IS MACE.. COLONEL GIDEON MACE RETIRED

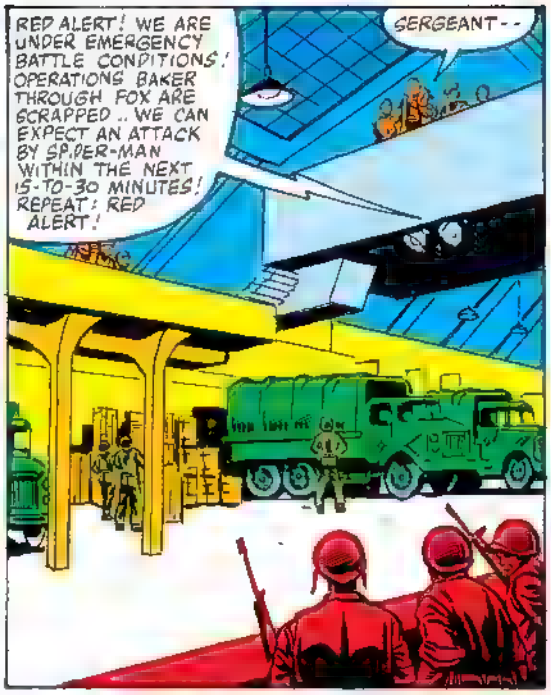
YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN LEARNING THAT I'VE DECLARED WAR ON YOUR KIND... NEW YORK'S SUPER HEROES. IT'S REALLY QUITE ASTOUNDING JUST HOW MANY ILLICIT ORGANIZATIONS WERE WILLING TO FUND MY NEW ARMY.
YEAH I'LL BET! LISTEN, MACE, I DON'T KNOW YOU FROM ADAM--BUT YOU SHOT UP A FRIEND OF MINE, AND THAT MAKES THIS "WAR" OF YOURS A PERSONAL THING WITH ME!
DOES IT NOW?

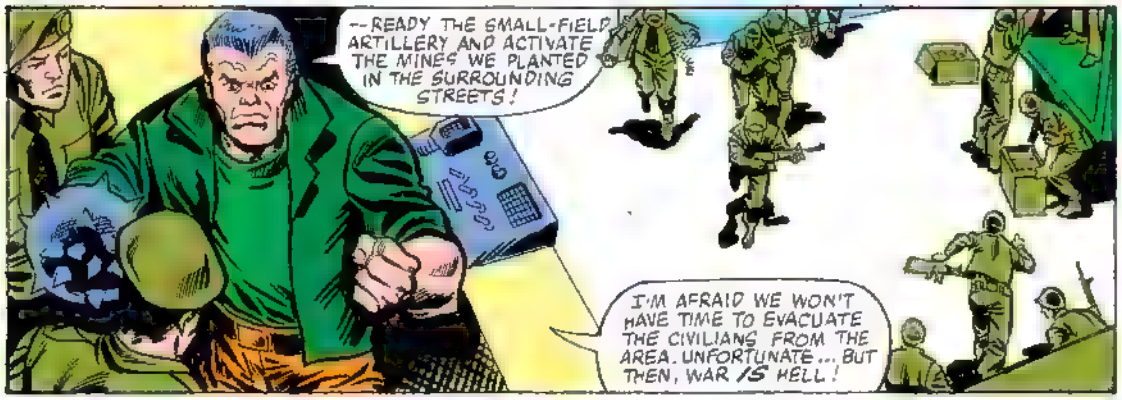
YOU'RE DARNED RIGHT IT DOES. BESIDES, IF YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR LITTLE DECLARATION OF WAR, I DOUBT THAT I COULD STAY OUT OF THIS FOR LONG!
IF BY THAT, YOU MEAN THAT YOU MIGHT BE A FUTURE TARGET, YOU'RE QUITE CORRECT.

AS TO THE STATE OF MY SANITY.. THAT IS FOR HISTORY TO DECIDE. BUT, SINCE YOU SEEM SO EAGER TO CONFRONT ME, I SHALL MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU!
YOU CAN FIND ME AT THE EASTSIDE NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY IN MANHATTAN
OVER AND OUT!

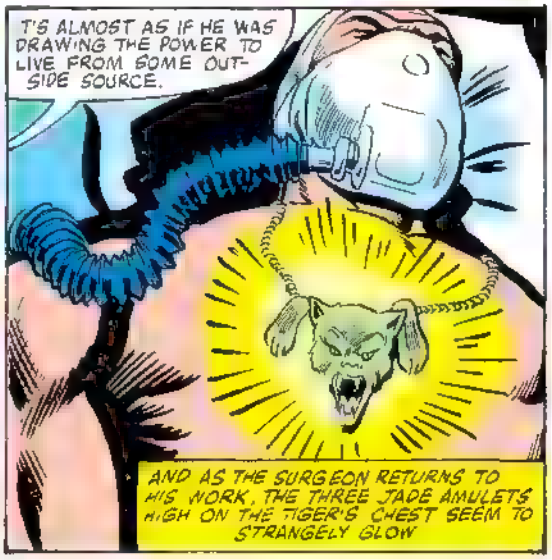
WHY, THAT MILITARISTIC SICKO--!
YOU WANT A WAR, MACE? OKAY I'LL GIVE YOU ONE!

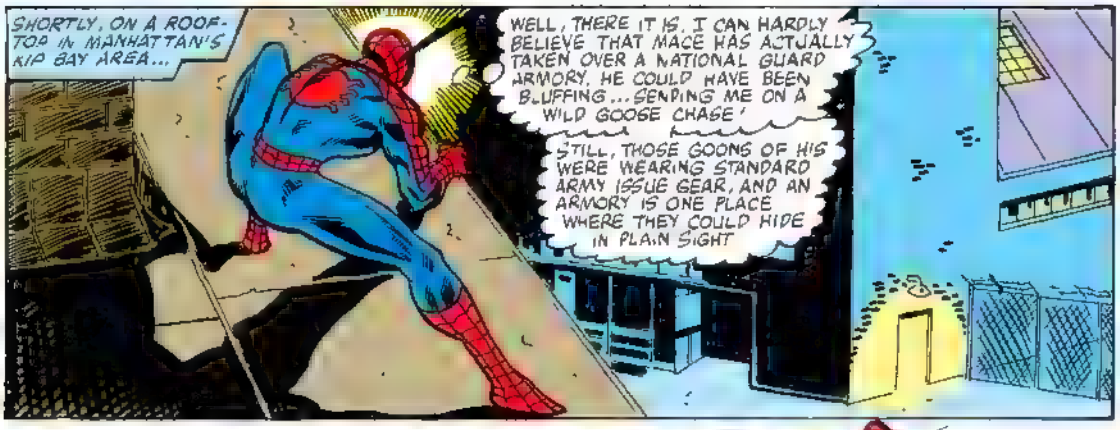
MEANWHILE, BACK AT MACE'S HEADQUARTERS...
UH, SIR? ARE YOU SURE IT WAS WISE TO GIVE AWAY OUR LOCATION? SUPPOSE HE GOES TO THE AUTHORITIES?
NOT SPIDER-MAN ... THAT'S NOT HIS STYLE. I HAD A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE RUN ON HIM... HE'S A LONER BY NATURE.
BESIDES, THIS IS JUST THE SORT OF CHALLENGE THE MEN NEED


RED ALERT! WE ARE UNDER EMERGENCY BATTLE CONDITIONS! OPERATIONS BAKER THROUGH FOX ARE SCRAPPED .. WE CAN EXPECT AN ATTACK BY SPIDER-MAN WITHIN THE NEXT 15-TO-30 MINUTES! REPEAT: RED ALERT!
SERGEANT--


--READY THE SMALL-FIELD ARTILLERY AND ACTIVATE THE MINES WE PLANTED IN THE SURROUNDING STREETS!
I'M AFRAID WE WON'T HAVE TIME TO EVACUATE THE CIVILIANS FROM THE AREA. UNFORTUNATE... BUT THEN, WAR IS HELL!

AT THAT MOMENT, IN BELLEVUE'S EMERGENCY O.R ...
THAT'S THE SEVENTH BULLET I'VE REMOVED... AND I SEE ANOTHER VERY CLOSE TO A MAJOR ARTERY!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS MAN IS STILL ALIVE!

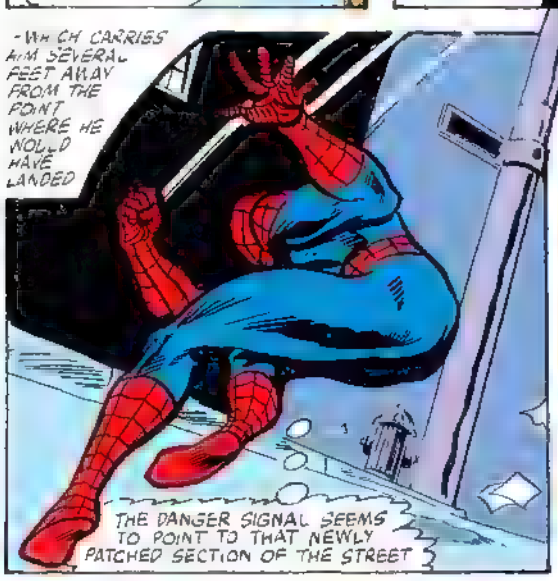

IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE WAS DRAWING THE POWER TO LIVE FROM SOME OUTSIDE SOURCE.
AND AS THE SURGEON RETURNS TO HIS WORK, THE THREE JADE AMULETS HIGH ON THE TIGER'S CHEST SEEM TO STRANGELY GLOW

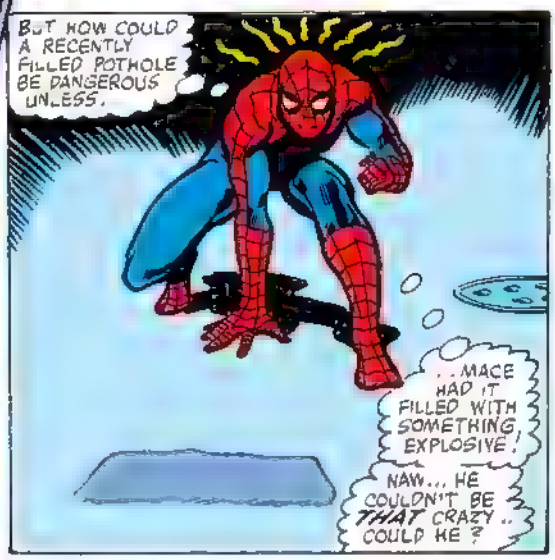

SHORTLY, ON A ROOFTOP IN MANHATTAN'S KIP BAY AREA...
WELL, THERE IT IS. I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THAT MACE HAS ACTUALLY TAKEN OVER A NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY. HE COULD HAVE BEEN BLUFFING... SENDING ME ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE!
STILL, THOSE GOONS OF HIS WERE WEARING STANDARD ARMY ISSUE GEAR, AND AN ARMORY IS ONE PLACE WHERE THEY COULD HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT

WELL, NO USE IN PROLONGING THE SUSPENSE!
MACE PROBABLY EXPECTS ME TO ATTACK FROM THE ROOFTOPS I THINK I'LL JUST SURPRISE HIM AND WALTZ IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR

BUT, AS SPIDER-MAN DROPS EARTHWARD...
WHOA! MY SPIDER-SENSE IS GOING OFF LIKE A FOUR-ALARM FIRE!

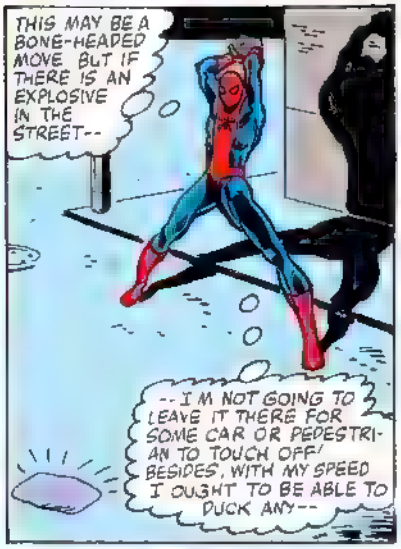
THERE'S SOME BIG DANGER LURKING RIGHT ABOUT WHERE I'M ABOUT TO LAND!
UTILIZING HIS AMAZING ACROBATIC PROWESS, SPIDER-MAN REFLEXIVELY TWISTS HIS BODY ABOUT IN A LIGHTNING-FAST SOMERSAULT--

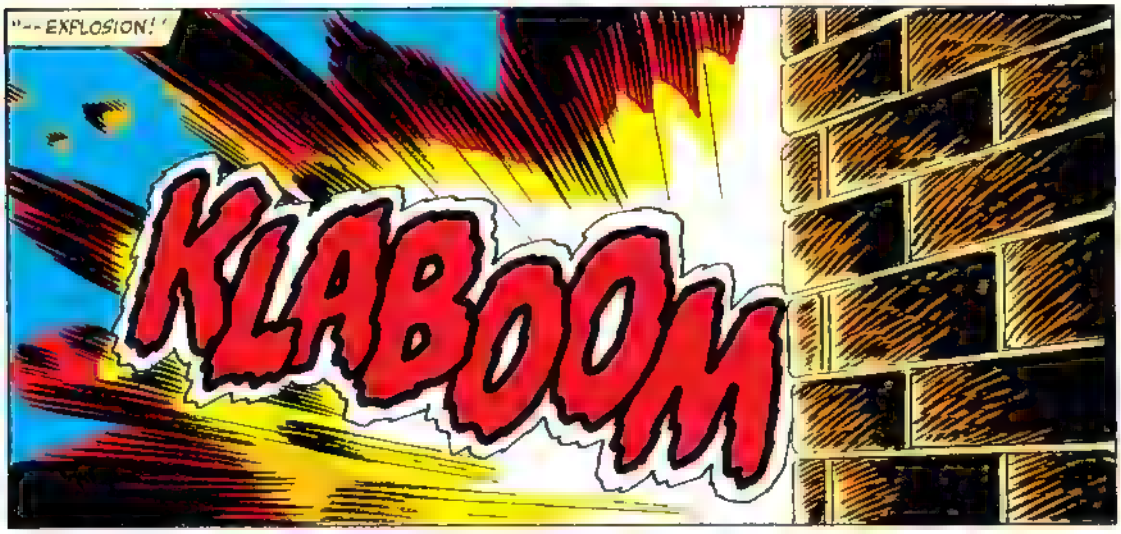

-WHICH CARRIES HIM SEVERAL FEET AWAY FROM THE POINT WHERE HE WOULD HAVE LANDED
THE DANGER SIGNAL SEEMS TO POINT TO THAT NEWLY PATCHED SECTION OF THE STREET

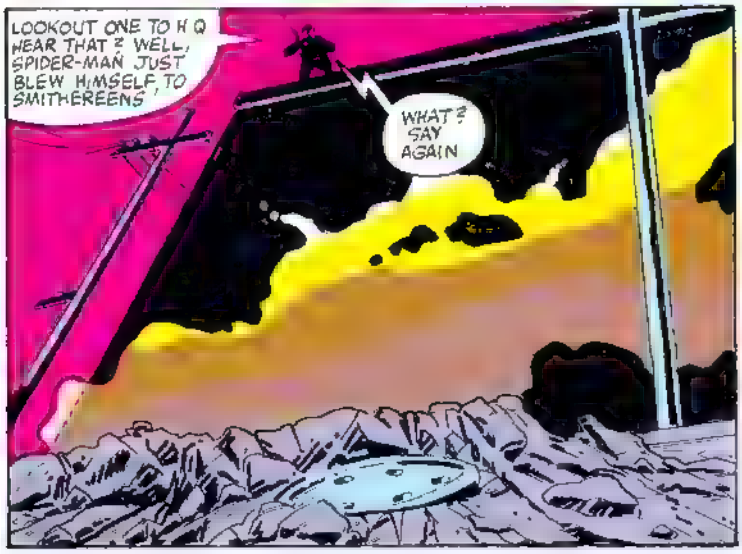

BUT HOW COULD A RECENTLY FILLED POTHOLE BE DANGEROUS UNLESS,
...MACE HAD IT FILLED WITH SOMETHING EXPLOSIVE!
NAW... HE COULDN'T BE THAT CRAZY... COULD HE?

WELL, THERE'S ONE WAY TO FIND OUT THIS CHUNK OF SIDEWALK SHOULD DO THE TRICK
WARILY SPIDER-MAN APPROACHES THE NEWLY-PAVED SECTION OF THE STREET AND, AS HE MOVES, HE IS CLOSELY WATCHED--

--BY A ROOFTOP SENTRY WITH AN INFRARED SNOOPER-SCOPE

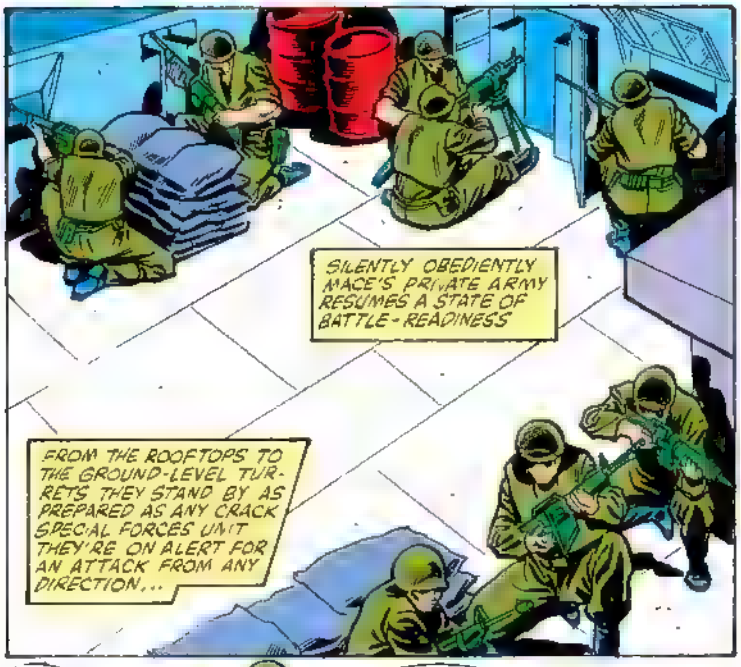

THIS MAY BE A BONE-HEADED MOVE BUT IF THERE IS AN EXPLOSIVE IN THE STREET--
--I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE IT THERE FOR SOME CAR OR PEDESTRIAN TO TOUCH OFF! BESIDES, WITH MY SPEED I OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO DUCK ANY--

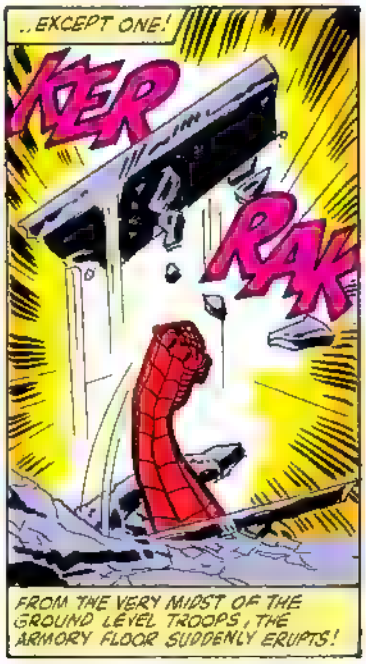

"--EXPLOSION!"
KLABOOM


LOOKOUT ONE TO H Q HEAR THAT? WELL, SPIDER-MAN JUST BLEW HIMSELF TO SMITHEREENS!
WHAT? SAY AGAIN

I SAID SPIDER-MAN JUST BLEW HIMSELF TO SMITHEREENS
FOR A MINUTE, IT SEEMED LIKE HE DETECTED ONE OF OUR MINES. BUT THEN, HE THREW SOMETHING AT IT ..DELIBERATELY BLEW IT! THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF HIM!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! MY SOURCES SAID HE WAS RECKLESS, BUT NOT STUPID! WE COULDN'T HAVE KILLED HIM SO EASILY!
DEACTIVATE THE REMAINING MINES .. THAT EXPLOSION WILL UNDOUBTEDLY ATTRACT THE AUTHORITIES, AND I DON'T WANT TO RISK OPEN COMBAT WITH THE N.Y.P.D JUST YET
THE MANNER IN WHICH THE MINE WAS PLANTED SHOULD CONVINCE THEM THAT IT WAS A SIMPLE GAS MAIN EXPLOSION
MEANWHILE REMAIN ON RED ALERT THIS COULD BE A TRICK
YOU HEARD THE COLONEL! GET BACK TO YOUR POSITIONS!


SILENTLY OBEDIENTLY MACE'S PRIVATE ARMY RESUMES A STATE OF BATTLE-READINESS
FROM THE ROOFTOPS TO THE GROUND-LEVEL TURRETS THEY STAND BY AS PREPARED AS ANY CRACK SPECIAL FORCES UNIT THEY'RE ON ALERT FOR AN ATTACK FROM ANY DIRECTION...


..EXCEPT ONE!
KER
RAK
FROM THE VERY MIDST OF THE GROUND LEVEL TROOPS, THE ARMORY FLOOR SUDDENLY ERUPTS!

HUH?
'RIMENY,
IT'S... SPIDER-MAN!
RIGHT THE FIRST TIME! AND I'M HERE TO SETTLE THE SCORE FOR THE WHITE TIGER! SO TRY SOMETHING...JUST TRY!
AS IF I NEED TO CHALLENGE THEM! ANOTHER SECOND, AND THEY'LL ALL HAVE ME IN THEIR SIGHTS!

BUT THEN, A SECOND IS ALL THE TIME I NEED!

WITH A SINGLE BOUND, SPIDER-MAN SPRINGS UP TOWARDS THE RAFTERS OF THE CAVERNOUS ARMORY--

SO THAT THE ONLY ONES CAUGHT IN THE WITHERING CROSSFIRE ARE MACE'S MEN THEMSELVES!

CEASE FIRE! CEASE--

BOY, THAT DIDN'T LAST LONG! THEY'LL RECOVER, THOUGH... I NOTICED THEY WERE ALL WEARING FLAK VESTS. THE WORST THEY'LL SUFFER ARE SOME BROKEN RIBS!

FUNNY... I CAN STILL FIND IT IN MYSELF TO FEEL SORRY FOR THEM, EVEN AFTER WHAT THEY DID TO THE TIGER AND HIS FAMILY.

THAT'S WHAT SEPARATES ME FROM THEM, I GUESS.

THAT'S IT! BURN HIM DOWN!

YEOW! FLAMETHROWERS! THESE GUYS JUST AREN'T PLAYING SOLDIER... THEY'RE REALLY FIGHTING THIS THING LIKE A WAR!

IT'S LIKE FIGHTING THE PUNISHER* IN REVERSE, EXCEPT THAT THERE'S A WHOLE COMPANY OF THESE GUYS, AND NONE OF THEM ARE QUITE IN THE PUNISHER'S LEAGUE!

NO! WE'LL BE KILLED!

*THE EX MARINE WHO FIGHTS A ONE MAN WAR AGAINST CRIME - DENNY.

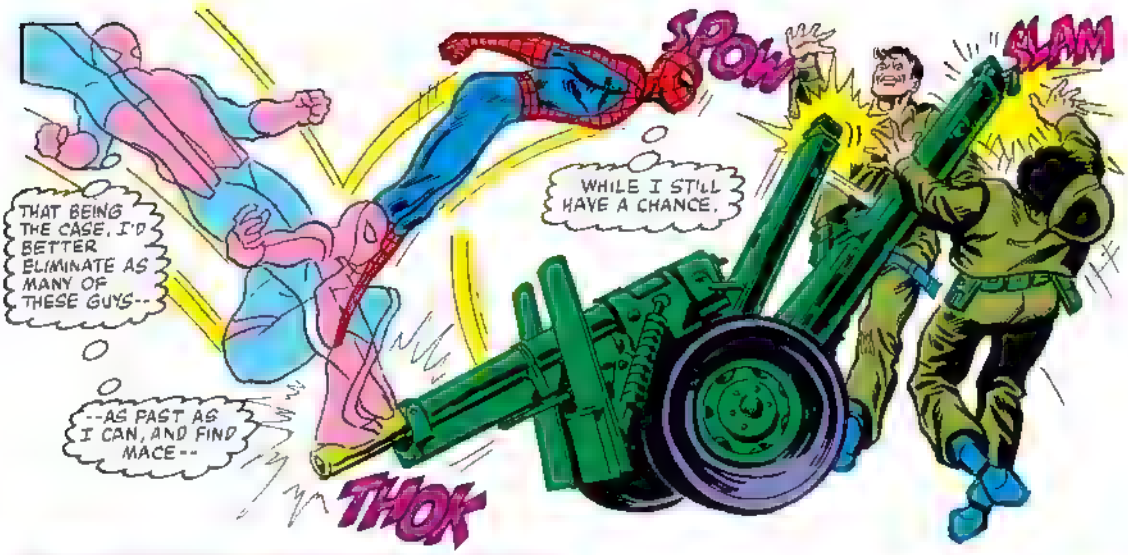
NOT QUITE GUYS, BUT THE FALL SHOULD KNOCK THE WIND OUT OF YOU!

THWUMP

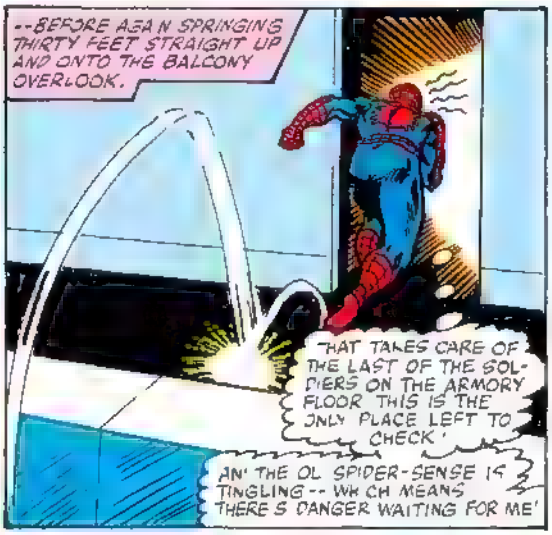
NOW WHAT?! HOWITZERS?

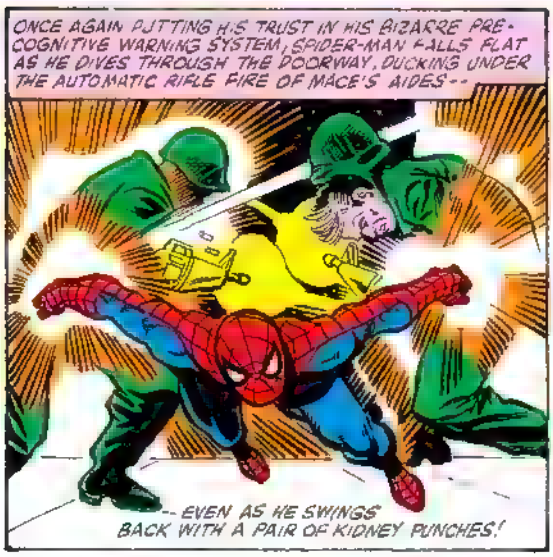
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! WHAT'RE THEY GOING TO USE NEXT... TANKS?

WHAT AM I THINKING? THIS IS AN ARMORY-- THEY JUST MIGHT HAVE ONE!


SPOW
SLAM
THAT BEING THE CASE, I'D BETTER ELIMINATE AS MANY OF THESE GUYS--
WHILE I STILL HAVE A CHANCE.
--AS FAST AS I CAN, AND FIND MACE--
THOK

SPRINGING UP OVER THE FIRST CANNON, SPIDER-MAN DIVES OVER THE SECOND, FLATTENING ITS GUNNERS IN AN INSTANT--
CHUNK
WHUNK


--BEFORE AGAIN SPRINGING THIRTY FEET STRAIGHT UP AND ONTO THE BALCONY OVERLOOK.
THAT TAKES CARE OF THE LAST OF THE SOLDIERS ON THE ARMORY FLOOR. THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE LEFT TO CHECK!
AN' THE OL' SPIDER-SENSE IS TINGLING -- WHICH MEANS THERE'S DANGER WAITING FOR ME!


ONCE AGAIN PUTTING HIS TRUST IN HIS BIZARRE PRE-COGNITIVE WARNING SYSTEM, SPIDER-MAN FALLS FLAT AS HE DIVES THROUGH THE DOORWAY, DUCKING UNDER THE AUTOMATIC RIFLE FIRE OF MACE'S AIDES--
-- EVEN AS HE SWINGS BACK WITH A PAIR OF KIDNEY PUNCHES!

AND THEN, HE IS AT LAST FACE-TO-FACE WITH HIS QUARRY...
LET ME TAKE A WILD GUESS... YOU'RE MACE, RIGHT?
YOU LIVE UP TO YOUR REPUTATION FOR BOTH SKILL AND SARCASM, SPIDER-MAN! TOO BAD THAT NEITHER WILL DO YOU ANY GOOD!

YOU LIVE UP TO YOUR REP, TOO, MACE! YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY CRAZY TO THINK THAT I'D GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO USE THAT GUN!

SMAAK

IMPUDENT FOOL! I DON'T NEED MY SERVICE REVOLVER TO HANDLE YOU!

SAYS YOU!

DAK-KOOM

BAH! YOUR HIGHLY PUBLICIZED SPEED HAS SPARED YOU FROM ONE BLOW OF MY MACE-HAND, BUT YOU CAN'T EVADE ME FOREVER!

WANNA BET, MACEY? IF THREATS LIKE THAT CAME TRUE, I'D HAVE BEEN DEAD YEARS AGO!

YOU'LL DIE YET!

YEAH, I PROBABLY WILL SOMEDAY. I HEAR IT HAPPENS TO EVERYONE EVENTUALLY! BUT I DON'T THINK I'M READY TO CASH IN TODAY...

..ESPECIALLY AT THE HAND OF A MILITARY MENTAL CASE!

IDIOT! YOU'RE JUST LIKE ALL THE REST!

I SHOULD HAVE MADE GENERAL... BUT THE JOINT CHIEFS WERE JEALOUS OF MY ABILITIES, MY LEADERSHIP CABABILITIES, MY MIND FOR STRATEGY!

FTOOM

THEY TRIED TO USE MY DISABILITY AS AN EXCUSE TO MUSTER ME OUT. BUT I SAW THROUGH THEIR PLOY!

KRRRSK

THEM AND THEIR NEW VOLUNTEER ARMY... PHAH! THE RESOURCES I'VE CALLED UPON, THE MEN I'VE ASSEMBLED COULD OVERCOME THEIR FORCES IN A MATTER OF WEEKS!

AND ONE DAY, I WILL SEE TO IT THAT JUST SUCH A THING HAPPENS.

OH JUST LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO WIPE OUT ALL OF US COSTUMED TYPES?

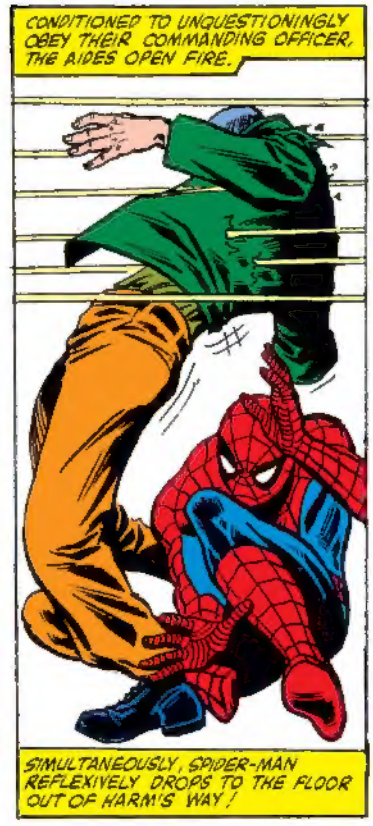
WELL, IN THAT CASE, HOW'S IT THAT YOU'VE JUST LOST? PRIDE? OVER-CONFIDENCE?

OR MAYBE YOUR MASTER STRATEGY IS JUST ANOTHER FANTASY!

YOU THINK ME DEFEATED? THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG! WHILE I'VE KEPT YOU BUSY--

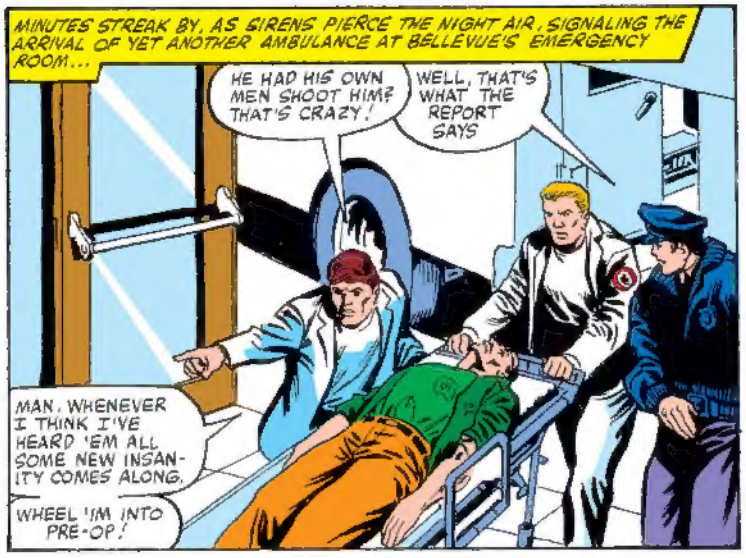
--MY AIDES HAVE HAD TIME TO RECOVER!
SO WHAT? MACE, IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, THEY'D HAVE TO SHOOT YOU TO SHOOT ME!

PRECISELY! IN A WAR, THE GOOD SOLDIER IS ALWAYS PREPARED TO SUFFER THE OCCASIONAL SACRIFICE!
MY SAFETY DOESN'T MATTER! GET SPIDER-MAN... FIRE! FIRE!
GOOD GRIEF! HE'S GONE TOTALLY OVER THE EDGE! AND THEY'RE GOING TO--!


CONDITIONED TO UNQUESTIONINGLY OBEY THEIR COMMANDING OFFICER, THE AIDES OPEN FIRE.
SIMULTANEOUSLY, SPIDER-MAN REFLEXIVELY DROPS TO THE FLOOR OUT OF HARM'S WAY!

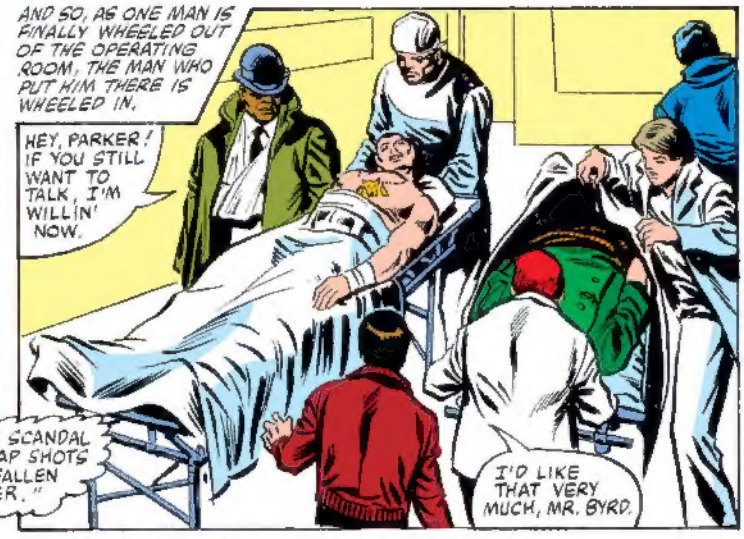
AND THEN, AS GIDEON MACE CRUMPLES TO THE FLOOR, OUT OF HARM'S WAY.
YOU... IDIOTS!

ARE YOU AS MAD AS HE WAS? THERE'LL BE NO MORE KILLING TONIGHT, DO YOU HEAR?
NO MORE KILLING!
SO GREAT IS HIS SPEED, SO POWERFUL HIS SWING, SO INTENSE HIS ANGER, THAT HE SLAPS BOTH MEN UNCONSCIOUS BEFORE EITHER CAN SQUEEZE OFF ANOTHER ROUND.

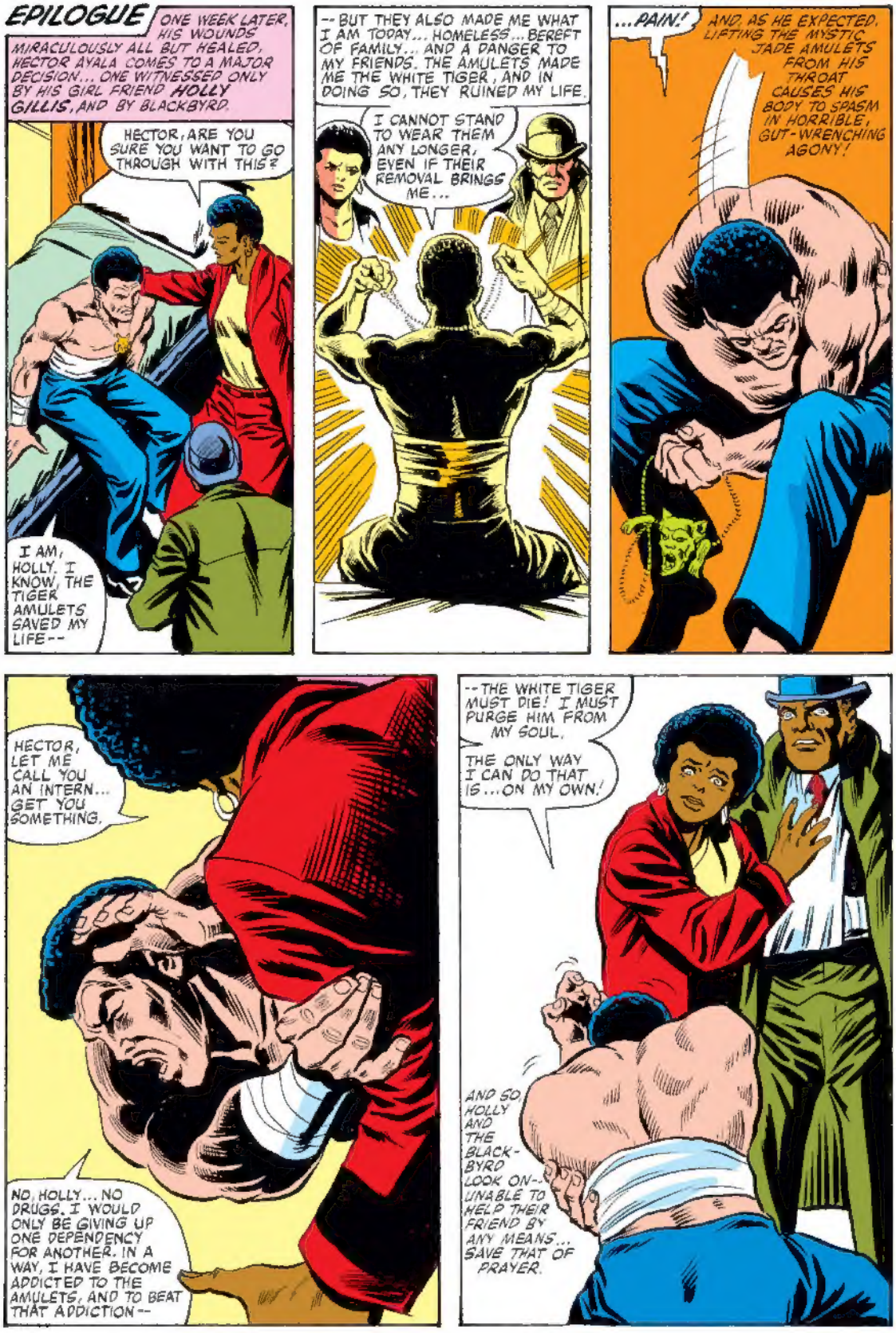

MINUTES STREAK BY, AS SIRENS PIERCE THE NIGHT AIR, SIGNALING THE ARRIVAL OF YET ANOTHER AMBULANCE AT BELLEVUE'S EMERGENCY ROOM...
HE HAD HIS OWN MEN SHOOT HIM? THAT'S CRAZY!
WELL, THAT'S WHAT THE REPORT SAYS
MAN, WHENEVER I THINK I'VE HEARD 'EM ALL SOME NEW INSANITY COMES ALONG.
WHEEL 'IM INTO PRE-OP!

AND, AS THE BULLET-RIDDEN GIDEON MACE IS RUSHED DOWN THE HALL, PETER PARKER ONCE MORE EMERGES ON THE SCENE.
WHAT A SAD CASE!
DESPITE WHAT HE'S DONE, I CAN'T FIND IT IN MYSELF TO HATE MACE.

THE ONLY FEELING I CAN DREDGE UP FOR HIM IS ... PITY. I PROBABLY SHOULD GET SOME PICTURES, BUT I JUST CAN'T.
LET SOME SCANDAL SHEET SNAP SHOTS OF THE "FALLEN SOLDIER."


AND SO, AS ONE MAN IS FINALLY WHEELED OUT OF THE OPERATING ROOM, THE MAN WHO PUT HIM THERE IS WHEELED IN.
HEY, PARKER! IF YOU STILL WANT TO TALK, I'M WILLIN' NOW.
I'D LIKE THAT VERY MUCH, MR. BYRD.

HOW'S HECTOR? IS HE GOING TO MAKE IT?
YEAH, HE WAS REAL LUCKY ... ALL THAT LEAD JUST MISSED THE VITAL ORGANS BY INCHES ... LESS IN SOME PLACES.
DO YA KNOW, THEY PULLED ABOUT 12 SLUGS OUTTA HIM! HE'S GOT MORE THAN A COUPLE OF DOCTORS HERE BELIEVIN' IN MIRACLES.
YEAH, HE'S GONNA LIVE, PARKER. I JUST HOPE THAT, AFTER ALL THAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM, HE CAN STILL FIND SOMETHIN' TO LIVE FOR!


EPILOGUE
ONE WEEK LATER, HIS WOUNDS MIRACULOUSLY ALL BUT HEALED, HECTOR AYALA COMES TO A MAJOR DECISION... ONE WITNESSED ONLY BY HIS GIRL FRIEND HOLLY GILLIS, AND BY BLACKBYRD.
HECTOR, ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS?
I AM, HOLLY. I KNOW, THE TIGER AMULETS SAVED MY LIFE--
--BUT THEY ALSO MADE ME WHAT I AM TODAY... HOMELESS... BEREFT OF FAMILY... AND A DANGER TO MY FRIENDS. THE AMULETS MADE ME THE WHITE TIGER, AND IN DOING SO, THEY RUINED MY LIFE.
I CANNOT STAND TO WEAR THEM ANY LONGER, EVEN IF THEIR REMOVAL BRINGS ME...
...PAIN!
AND, AS HE EXPECTED, LIFTING THE MYSTIC JADE AMULETS FROM HIS THROAT CAUSES HIS BODY TO SPASM IN HORRIBLE, GUT-WRENCHING AGONY!
HECTOR, LET ME CALL YOU AN INTERN... GET YOU SOMETHING.
NO, HOLLY... NO DRUGS. I WOULD ONLY BE GIVING UP ONE DEPENDENCY FOR ANOTHER. IN A WAY, I HAVE BECOME ADDICTED TO THE AMULETS, AND TO BEAT THAT ADDICTION--
--THE WHITE TIGER MUST DIE! I MUST PURGE HIM FROM MY SOUL.
THE ONLY WAY I CAN DO THAT IS...ON MY OWN!
AND SO, HOLLY AND THE BLACK-BYRD LOOK ON--UNABLE TO HELP THEIR FRIEND BY ANY MEANS... SAVE THAT OF PRAYER.

THREE WEEKS LATER, AT THE PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL...
SAME HERE, HECTOR. YOU SURE YOU'RE DOIN' THE RIGHT THING?
BLACKBYRD, MI AMIGO, I WILL MISS YOU.
YES, I AM. HOLLY AND I HAVE GIVEN THIS MUCH THOUGHT. THERE ARE JUST TOO MANY PEOPLE IN NEW YORK WHO REMEMBER WHAT I ONCE WAS.
HOLLY AND I ARE GOING FAR AWAY, TO SOME PLACE WHERE NO ONE HAS EVER HEARD OF THE WHITE TIGER... SOME PLACE WHERE HECTOR AYALA CAN LIVE AGAIN!

BUT BEFORE I GO... HERE. THESE AMULETS ONCE BELONGED TO THE SONS OF THE TIGER.* PLEASE SEE TO IT THAT THEY GET THEM BACK... AND WARN THEM OF WHAT THE POWER WITHIN CAN DO!
I'LL BE SURE TO DO THAT, HECTOR! YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT!
GRACIAS, BLACKBYRD.
*SEE ALMOST ANY ISSUE OF DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU. --DENNY.

AND, AND AS THE BUS PULLS AWAY, HEADED FOR POINTS WEST...
I'LL BE DARNED! HE REALLY DID IT!
YEP. SURE DID.
I WISH HIM AND HIS LADY LUCK. THEY'RE GOOD PEOPLE... THEY DESERVE A LITTLE HAPPINESS.
YEAH... WELL, SOME PEOPLE ARE BORN LUCKY, AN' SOME HAVE TO MAKE THEIR OWN LUCK. HECTOR'S ONE OF THE SECOND KIND, I GUESS. BUT I THINK HE'LL MANAGE.

AFTER ALL, HE'S ALREADY PROVEN THAT HE'S SMARTER THAN YOU ARE!
OH? HOW'S THAT?
HE'S LEARNED ENOUGH TO QUIT WHILE HE'S AHEAD!
END